



Time for standardised packaging

**Annual Review
– 2013**

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) is a campaigning public health charity that works to eliminate the harm caused by tobacco. ASH is a registered charity, founded in 1971 by the Royal College of Physicians.

All photographs by Nicolas Chinardet. Front cover by Wee Creative.

Chair’s Introduction

Each year brings new challenges and new opportunities in the ongoing battle to reduce the harm caused by smoking. The most important tobacco control policy currently on the political agenda is standardised packaging. The tobacco industry spent millions of pounds lobbying against the policy and despite considerable cross-party support for the measure – including from health ministers - unfortunately the Coalition Government decided to put off making a decision on whether to bring forward legislation. Undaunted, ASH has continued to work with colleagues in the Smokefree Action Coalition to make standardised packaging a reality.

In England, ASH has been successfully promoting the CLear standard for local government and encouraging councils to sign up to a new Declaration to protect their health policies from tobacco industry interference. I’m delighted that so many local authorities are engaging in these measures – a reflection on ASH’s decision to seize the opportunity provided by the transition of public health to local government.

Over the past year ASH has benefited enormously from the support provided by two Public Health trainees who joined ASH on short-term placements. The highly skilled pair contributed greatly to the Smoking and Pregnancy report and to the report of the APPG Inquiry into illicit trade in tobacco products.

In Europe, ASH has also been working hard to build support for the new EU Tobacco Products Directive which has the potential to help save thousands of lives not just in the UK but throughout Europe.

On behalf of my fellow trustees I am pleased to present the 2013 annual review and to thank our funders and supporters without whom this vitally important work would not be possible.

Professor John Moxham

Chairman

Overview

ASH’s priority this year has been the continued push for plain, standardised tobacco packaging to put an end to the last vestige of tobacco promotion in the UK. We were very disappointed by the Government’s announcement that it was postponing a decision on this but we are very encouraged by the strong support from the public and parliamentarians from across all Parties.

Public Health is undergoing its biggest upheaval in almost 40 years. From the first proposals to transfer lead responsibility for tobacco control to local government the ASH team were acutely aware of the risks and opportunities that lay ahead. The complexity of organisational change risked causing a year of paralysis in the run-up to the change. Life in local government is a major change for public health staff, with radically different perspectives, priorities, and processes to the NHS. Leading up to these changes, ASH initiated a series of measures in 2012 which have been brought to fruition in 2013. These include the CLear self-assessment tool, the development of policy and service improvement resources and – in collaboration with Newcastle City Council - the Local Government Declaration.

In Europe ASH worked with partners in building support for the proposed revised EU Tobacco Products Directive which includes measures such as making picture warnings mandatory and increasing the size of the warnings so that they occupy 75% of the front and back surfaces of the pack.

Other activities over the year included providing the secretariat for the APPG on smoking and health which carried out a major inquiry into the illicit trade of tobacco.



Sustaining the standardised packs campaign

On 16th April, to mark the anniversary of the launch of the public consultation on standardised packaging the APPG on smoking and health, chaired by Stephen Williams MP, held a reception at the House of Commons. Guest of honour was Mike Daube (a previous Director of ASH and now public health professor and expert adviser to the Australian government) who talked about how standardised packaging had been successfully implemented in Australia.

In May, when it became clear that the Government had postponed a decision to proceed with standardised packaging for tobacco products ASH and members of the Smokefree Action Coalition pledged to re-ignite the campaign, initially by calling for a free vote in Parliament on the issue.

Subsequently, an amendment on standardised packs to the Children and Families Bill was tabled in the House of Lords with cross-party and cross bench support.

Meanwhile, in the House of Commons a Westminster Hall debate led by Bob Blackman MP, Secretary of the APPG on Smoking and Health, was very well attended and prompted a wide-ranging discussion amongst MPs. The then Public Health Minister, Anna Soubry gave a very personal response, stating that she was an example of a young person who took up smoking before the age of 18 and who was attracted to smoking by virtue of the glamorous packaging.

“I distinctly remember the power of that package. It was the opening of the cellophane and the gold and the silver that was so powerfully important to many people who, as youngsters, took up smoking. I say that to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury North (Mr Nuttall) who says that he has never met anyone so drawn; well, he has now, because I am that person, and I am not alone by any means.” (Hansard. Westminster Hall Debate, 3 Sept. 2013)

CLear & SFAC

Local Government has long been a vital partner in tobacco control but transition of public health responsibilities from the NHS has put England's town and county halls at the centre of local tobacco policy. That is why ASH has made a priority of building stronger networks in local government. As a result the Smokefree Action Coalition is now bigger than ever, with over 240 member organisations. The loss of Primary Care Trust members in April has been more than made up for by the addition of 38 local authorities, 4 Clinical Commissioning Groups, 4 NHS Trusts and 46 other organisations that have joined this year.

To assist those who are new to tobacco control, ASH launched an update to its *Top of the Agenda* publication which explains how the new public health system works and the importance of prioritising tobacco control within public health. It includes insights from professionals working across the system as well as political perspectives from local councillors from each of the major political parties.

The launch took place at the UK National Smoking Cessation Conference in June and was accompanied by a workshop at the conference conducted by ASH Special Projects Advisor, Hazel Cheeseman. The report has proved a popular resource and has attracted praise from partners.

In addition, we have updated the web-based *Local Costs of Tobacco* which enables the use of local smoking prevalence data to estimate the costs of smoking in a locality.

ASH took part in the Public Health England Conference in September to help raise the profile of local tobacco control with a particular focus on the CLear process. CLear which stands for Challenging services, Leadership and Results is a self-assessment tool which allows local authorities to review existing action on tobacco control, to follow best practice, and to identify further areas for improvement. To date 89 local authorities are enrolled in the scheme and 131 Peer Assessors have been trained. The first CLear awards for excellence in local tobacco control were conducted in partnership with Cancer Research UK at the Local Government Association conference in Manchester.

“ASH makes a unique and authoritative, independent contribution to addressing the appalling impact of tobacco on length of life and the quality of life. Through its research and advocacy, ASH has built strong and enduring collaborations across the public health system and has, as a consequence made many improvements possible. Tackling smoking rates, particularly amongst the very young, is Public Health England’s top priority and we look forward to working closely with ASH as a key partner.”

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England

Protecting local tobacco control from the tobacco industry

Newcastle City Council has worked with our support to establish a Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. The declaration commits councils to protect communities from tobacco harms and protect policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry. Past examples of industry engagement with local authorities have included sponsoring smoking shelters on council property, selective funding of work on illicit tobacco and even sponsorship of a city academy school. In addition, representatives of BAT subsidiary, Nicoventures, have been seeking meetings with councils to discuss plans for tobacco harm reduction.

Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control

We acknowledge that:

- Smoking is the single greatest cause of premature death and disease in our communities;
- Reducing smoking in our communities significantly increases household incomes and benefits the local economy;
- Reducing smoking amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities is the single most important means of reducing health inequalities;
- Smoking is an addiction largely taken up by children and young people, two thirds of smokers start before the age of 18;
- Smoking is an epidemic created and sustained by the tobacco industry, which promotes uptake of smoking to replace the 80,000 people it products kill in England every year; and
- The illicit trade in tobacco funds the activities of organized criminal gangs and gives children access to cheap tobacco.

As local leaders in public health we welcome the:

- Opportunity for local government to lead local action to tackle smoking and secure the health, welfare, social, economic and environmental benefits that come from reducing smoking prevalence;
- Commitment by the government to live up to its obligations as a party to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and in particular to protect the development of public health policy from the vested interests of the tobacco industry; and
- Endorsement of this declaration by the Department of Health, Public Health England and professional bodies.

We commit our Council from this date _____ to _____ to:

- Act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities and to raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities;
- Develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use;
- Participate in local and regional networks for support;
- Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities in our communities;
- Protect our tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, hospitality or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees;
- Monitor the progress of our plans against our commitments and publish the results; and
- Publicly declare our commitment to reducing smoking in our communities by joining the Smokefree Action Coalition, the alliance of organisations working to reduce the harm caused by tobacco.

Signatories for [insert council]

Leader of Council _____ Chief Executive _____ Director of Public Health _____

Endorsed by:

Alex Selby, Public Health Minister
Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive, Public Health England
Professor Dame Lucy Doolan, Chief Medical Officer (Department of Health)

Dr Sarah-Jane Hill, President, Association of Directors of Public Health
Dr Gillian Evans, President, UK Family of Public Health
Gordon Jones, Chief Executive, Children's Commissioner for England
Lord Williams, Chief Executive, Trading Standards Institute

Department of Health
Public Health England
NHS
Local Authorities
Public Health England



Smokefree ACTION
IT'S ABOUT HEALTH AND IT'S ABOUT TIME

Chair:
Peter Koller, President, YouGov
Keynote speakers include:
Prof Kevin Fenton, Dr Jonell Atherton
Cllr Jonathan McShane, Prof Bryan Stc

Going Local:
tobacco control in the new public health landscape

Smokefree Action Coalition Conference

Thursday 14th November, 9.30 - 4.00
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square
London, WC1R 4RL (near Holborn tube)

SFAC members: Free
Non SFAC members: £100

Find out if your organisation qualifies for a free place - contact hazel.cheeseman@ash.org.uk

Comprehensive tobacco control plan
Engaging local leaders...
Positioning tobacco control in local government...

APPG - Inquiry into Illicit Trade

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health held an Inquiry into the illicit trade in tobacco in December 2012/ January 2013 following the adoption of the Illicit Trade Protocol at the WHO FCTC Conference of the Parties in November 2012. The purpose was to establish the facts about the current extent of illicit trade, and how developments such as the Illicit Trade Protocol and standardised packs may affect it in the future.

The Inquiry also found that contrary to repeated claims from the tobacco industry, the levels of illicit trade in the UK have fallen substantially since 2000, despite the fact that the UK has high taxes and therefore high cigarette prices.

The Inquiry report also shows that there is no foundation to the industry claim that standardised packaging would lead to an increase in illicit trade. This is because the security features routinely used on current cigarette packs will also be present on standardised packs, including code numbers and hidden anti-counterfeit marks.



For his campaigning work on tobacco, Stephen Williams MP was awarded the WHO World No Tobacco Day medal. He was nominated by ASH and Smokefree South West.

“ASH is very highly respected both nationally and internationally, and justifiably so. Cancer Research UK is proud to be a member of Smokefree Action Coalition which, under the leadership of ASH, has campaigned so successfully for effective measures to reduce the harm caused by tobacco. Tobacco use is a leading cause of cancer and we have to succeed in reducing smoking prevalence if we are to beat cancer.”

Dr Harpal Kumar, Chief Executive, Cancer Research UK

The APPG report calls on the UK Government to sign and ratify the Illicit Trade Protocol as soon as possible. In addition, it recommends that the Government should encourage and support the development of regional partnerships to fight illicit trade, bringing together HM Revenue and Customs, police, Trading Standards Officers and health bodies.

A full list of contributors and a report of the inquiry is available at: <http://www.ash.org.uk/APPGillicit2013>

Members of the APPG have also been very active over the past year in building support among parliamentarians for standardised tobacco packaging. The officers of the Group – Chair Stephen Williams, Secretary Bob Blackman and Vice-Chair Kevin Barron - wrote to the Secretary of State and all Cabinet members on behalf of the APPG urging the government to commit to legislation. This was followed up in September with a Westminster Hall debate led by Bob Blackman MP.

Stephen Williams stepped down as Chair of the APPG on 7th October when he was appointed as a Minister to the DCLG. He was replaced by Paul Burstow MP as Chair.



Officers of the APPG with a clock showing the number of young people who had started smoking in the six months since the consultation closed on August 10th 2012.

Tax & smuggling

ASH'S Budget submission this year was endorsed by 87 health organisations. Recommendations in the submission included increasing tax by 5% above inflation, sustaining funding for the Government's anti-smuggling strategy, a cap on the prices tobacco companies can charge for their products, and for the Government to sign and ratify the FCTC Illicit Trade Protocol as soon as possible.

Public Opinion research

In February we commissioned the seventh annual ASH/YouGov survey of public attitudes to smoking and tobacco control. This year we conducted our first survey of smoking behaviours and attitudes of young people in Britain. Both surveys included questions on e-cigarette use and shisha. Among adults, we estimate there are 1.3 million regular users of e-cigarettes in Great Britain, including one smoker in ten, but use among people who have never smoked remains negligible. Among young people, awareness of e-cigarettes is high: two-thirds of 11-18 year olds and 83% of 16-18 year olds have heard of e-cigarettes. However, the survey found no evidence of regular e-cigarette use among children who have never smoked. We plan to repeat the youth survey in coming years.

Other findings from the adult survey revealed a small rise in support for standardised packs with 64% in favour (up from 62% in 2012). Data from the YouGov/ASH surveys have been published in the peer reviewed journals *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* and the *European Journal of Public Health*.

"As the David and Goliath battle continues ASH has a crucial role in galvanising and coordinating the tobacco control community, amplifying our message and dispelling myths both in England and in Europe."

Simon Gillespie,
Chief Executive,
British Heart
Foundation

“The RCP is proud to have set up ASH in 1971 and we continue to work closely with ASH on tobacco control initiatives. ASH acts as a coordinating hub for tobacco control issues, and is extremely effective at engaging the public health community so as to concentrate activities on the areas of greatest need.”

Sir Richard Thompson,
President of the Royal College of Physicians

Product Regulation

NICE guidance & MHRA ruling on e-cigarettes

An important part of our role is to build a UK consensus on tobacco harm reduction. ASH welcomed the publication of the NICE guidance on tobacco harm reduction published in May. (Deborah Arnott served on the NICE tobacco harm reduction Programme Development Group.) While recognising that quitting smoking is always the best option for smokers, the NICE guidance supports the use of licensed nicotine containing products to help smokers not currently able to quit to cut down and as a substitute for smoking.

Shortly after publication of the NICE guidance, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announced its decision to regulate e-cigarettes as medicinal products. This means that manufacturers of these devices will have to apply for a licence to allow their products to be sold in the UK. This measure is scheduled to enter into force in the UK in 2016.

ASH participated in the MHRA press launch of its decision on e-cigarette regulation, presenting our data on e-cigarette use in the British population. Deborah Arnott was a member of the MHRA expert advisory group on nicotine regulation.

ASH continues to act as an important source of evidence and advice on tobacco harm reduction. Our factsheets and briefings have been recognised as authoritative from all sides of the debate. One of the most contentious issues has been regulating the public use of electronic cigarettes and in October ASH and CIEH produced a briefing to help policy makers develop their policies on electronic cigarettes.

Smoking & pregnancy

The Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group, an ASH initiative set up following an inaugural expert seminar in March 2012, held a number of meetings over the past 12 months addressing issues such as training, service delivery and commissioning. There are now 21 partner organisations in the Group and in addition NICE and the Department of Health act as observers.

The activities of the Group culminated in a report, published in June, which sets out key recommendations to reduce the incidence of smoking in pregnancy. These include better data collection, implementation of NICE guidelines, routine use of carbon monoxide testing, and ensuring local stop smoking services are fully equipped to counsel and support pregnant smokers who want to quit. Department of Health officials have described smoking in pregnancy as the main priority for the remainder of the tobacco control plan for England and are meeting with the Challenge Group to pursue the group’s recommendations.

Smokefree Prisons

ASH welcomed the long-overdue announcement that UK prisons will be required to be totally tobacco and smokefree. Currently smoking is forbidden in all communal areas but prisoners are allowed to smoke in their cells, resulting in significant secondhand smoke exposure among inmates and staff. ASH Chief Executive Deborah Arnott has been appointed a member of the Tobacco and Smoke Free Prisons Steering Group which will oversee the implementation of this project. This will start in a set of early ‘adopter’ prisons to test the operational implementation of the policy. No prisoner will be required to give up tobacco without adequate provision of Nicotine Replacement therapy. Youth offender institutions are already smokefree as is the prison on the Isle of Man. Evidence from other countries such as the USA and Canada suggests that a comprehensive smokefree policy in prisons is achievable and will result in significant health benefits.

Tobacco Industry - BAT AGM

ASH complained to the Advertising Standards Authority about a series of ads by Gallaher/JTI published in national newspapers which asserted that the Government had “rejected” plain packaging for tobacco because “there was no credible evidence” to support such a policy. The ASA ruled that the ads were ‘misleading and must not be published again’.

As in previous years, ASH co-ordinated a very successful demonstration of young people from around the country outside the BAT AGM. Over 75 young people turned up and then went to Westminster to meet MPs and peers and lobby them on standardised packs.

At the AGM ASH Chief Executive Deborah Arnott asked questions about BAT’s funding of the campaign against standardised packs in the UK, Europe and New Zealand. Specifically she asked about funding of third parties such as the Institute of Economic Affairs as the IEA had refused to admit that it received tobacco money. Subsequently, ASH received a response revealing that the tobacco company had provided £11,056 in 2011 and £20,000 in 2012 to the IEA alone.



International: EU Tobacco Products Directive

In December 2012 the EU Commission published a draft proposal for a revised Tobacco Products Directive. Measures include a mandatory requirement for larger pictorial health warnings to cover the front and back surfaces of packs; granting Member States the right to introduce standardised packaging; a requirement for tobacco manufacturers to put in place measures to allow the tracking and tracing of all tobacco products at pack level; and prohibiting the inclusion of certain flavourings in tobacco products such as menthol.

The draft directive was debated by the European Parliament in October and at the time of writing, negotiations to reach an agreed position were still ongoing between the Council of Ministers, Parliament and European Commission.

ASH worked with members of the SFAC and the European Smokefree Partnership to build support for the draft Directive and to recommend improvements where appropriate.

“It takes courage, persistence and determination to improve public health, particularly when your work is in opposition to the vested interests of big business. The team at ASH have all of these vital qualities in abundance, which is why they get such impressive results. We at FPH are proud to work with ASH and support their important work to eliminate the harm caused by tobacco.”

Professor John Ashton, President of the Faculty of Public Health

Information & Media work

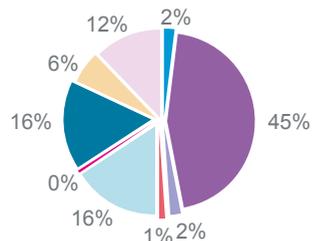
This year marked the second year of accreditation by the Information Standard, the Department of Health's quality standard body. Over the past 12 months 15 of the 32 detailed fact sheets were updated and a new fact sheet on e-cigarette use in Great Britain was added to the series. The ASH publications have also been redesigned to give them a modern, streamlined look.

ASH responded to numerous consultations on subjects including smoking in cars, ONS statistics and various NICE public health guidance updates.

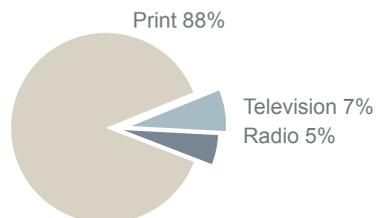
During the year we issued 13 press releases. Our weekly reach (that is, the number of people exposed to references to ASH in news stories) was an estimated 12.2 million.

Once again the topic attracting most coverage was standardised packaging which accounted for 45% of ASH's media coverage.

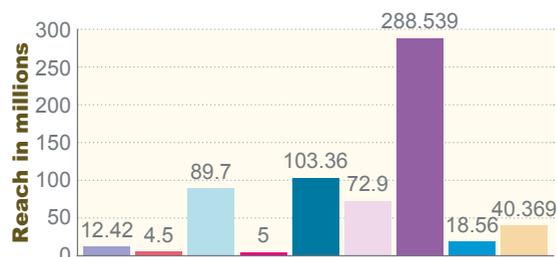
Overall media coverage by subject area



Total ASH reach by medium



ASH reach by subject areas



ASH Website

Traffic on the website remains high with 408,229 unique visitors between September 2012 and August 2013. Eighty per cent of these were from new visitors. This amounts to almost 1.5 million page views over that period, with an average rate of 1118 visits per day.

Most users of the ASH website (79%) are from the UK, with most overseas visitors coming from the USA, followed by India, Australia and Canada.

The Smokefree Action Coalition website, also maintained by ASH, is the main tool of the coalition's campaign for standardised packaging. See: <http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/>

ASH also maintains a webpage for the APPG on Smoking and Health on the ASH website. See: <http://www.ash.org.uk/about-ash/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-smoking-and-health>

Accounts 2012-13

A full copy of the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2013 can be found on the ASH website at: www.ash.org.uk/accounts2013

Acknowledgements

ASH would like to thank the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK and the Department of Health, as well as our individual members, for supporting and funding our work during the year.



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Public Health Trainees:

Dr Katie Hunter (Oct 2012-July 2013)
Katy Scammell (Jan 2013-June 2013)